

# A Message from the Prosecuting Attorney

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The prosecution of domestic violence is among the highest priorities of the Office of the Porter County Prosecuting Attorney. The unique dynamics of domestic violence create inherent problems in the criminal justice system. Over the length of an intimate and abusive relationship, victims of domestic violence are constantly told the abuse is their fault. They will feel guilt for summoning aid from police, and feel responsible for the sanctions imposed by the criminal justice system. Because they often live in a world dominated by psychological terror, they will be very reluctant to "cooperate" with authorities. This is especially true if the system offers them no assistance, no protection, and no relief. Society often perpetuates the myths that domestic violence is the fault of the woman, who only had to leave to solve the problem. Police, Prosecutors, Probation Officers, and Judges have to be better educated in order to effectively deal with the problem.

Intervention systems must not overlook the children, who are themselves victims. The cycle of violence will continue from generation to generation. Children who witness domestic violence in the home are many times more likely to be abusive adults. This is a cost our society cannot afford to pay.

It is impossible to expect the victim of domestic violence to negotiate the complex maze of the legal system without help. Victim advocates who are knowledgeable about the legal system, and who understand the dynamics of domestic violence, must be available to give assistance. Through the Victim Assistance Program and the Domestic Violence Unit of the Porter County Prosecuting Attorney, help and information is available. An effective coordinated response to domestic violence is essential. Only with the aid of these dedicated professionals can true justice and healing be accomplished. We are proud to assist in making these important services available to the citizens of Porter County.

Domestic violence occurs among all kinds of people. It cuts across cultural, economic and social boundaries. It can involve the person you have worked with for ten years, your best friend who married her childhood sweetheart, your teenage daughter who just met someone new and exciting, or your next-door neighbor. Together, we can prevent domestic violence. We must work together toward the common goal of insuring the safety of victims and holding offenders accountable and responsible for their behavior. We must learn to take action.

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